

Earth First! Action Update

No.40 JUNE 1997

30p

"Can we avoid catastrophe? Not if we keep sleepwalking through history" - Anon.

IT'S JUST NOT CRICKET

POTATOES ALL OUT FOR NOUGHT AS HEROES DIG IN

In Britain's first NVDA on a Genetically Manipulated-test site, the Super Heroes against Genetix First XI denuded their outposts again for a game of cricket on a potato test field site just outside Cambridge this month. Due to the nature of a somewhat muddy and sticky wicket potatoes replaced the traditional red ball. Fielders had a difficult time of it - most of the batting resulted in the 'balls' being smashed to pieces or else being lost amongst upturned soil. The entire crop of the test site was destroyed.

Whilst similar actions have been ongoing in Europe for some time this is the first in a series on British sites and marks a further development in the campaign against GM produce.

A Super Heroes spokesperson, Captain Chromosome, said: "The Test Match proved a huge success if somewhat one-sided - we fielded a team of some thirty Super Heroes whilst the Cambridge team didn't even show up. It simply isn't cricket."

When contacted the Development Director at PBI (Plant Breeders Institute) in Cambridge was initially stumped by the scoreline claiming that he couldn't see how it was possible. On checking the site on Monday morning, Mr Killiam predictably denied that the destroyed potatoes had been Genetically Manipulated saying instead that they had been "normal".

The particular potatoes targetted contain an antibiotic resistance gene which is also contained in Ciba Geigy's (now Novartis) Bt maize. This does not

have the support of any country in the EU and is actively opposed by Austria, Luxembourg, Italy and France.

AND THERE'S MORE...

In the same week as the shennanigans in Cambridge German activists were also busy as a field planted with GM potatoes was destroyed. After the plants had been pulled out the field was covered with a 'white powder', which was rumoured to be a herbicide. This is not the first time that a field of Genetically Manipulated Organisms has been visited by anti-genetics activists in Germany. In 1996 at least 12 fields were destroyed and at present a further four fields are being occupied to prevent the planting of GMOs.

AIRPORT EVICTIONS TAKE OFF

After a long hard winter in Devon and the rapid, violent evictions of Allercombe and Trollheim it looked like Bahylon had caught up and many people predicted the end of onsite campaigning. Now it's all different: undersheriffs everywhere are wondering who's next: Surrey County Council couldn't afford to fight in Guilford; and Manchester Airport is counting the cost of another mammoth eviction. There the baddies made the same mistakes all over again with the security costumer spinning outta control. The vindication of tunnels and the press attention at Fairmile brought confidence, publicity, new people and energy to the campaign against a second runway at Manchester Airport. Underground

the much hyped "men in black" had their high tech operation reduced to hammer and chisels for most of the time and so are learning to appreciate how much work goes into defending the earth.

The eviction finally began in mid May at Zion Tree where tree dwellers led the first line of defence whilst the tunnellers held out for almost a week. Undersheriff Randall Hibbert managed to get his PR operation off to an appalling start as the first person out of the first tunnel in the eviction had been sprayed with what the bailiffs said was CS gas (though in reality it was water). To complete the blunder a journalist was truncheoned on the head when dragged from a bender despite making it clear that he was not going to resist. The media reaction to the violence set the agenda for the rest of the eviction - identifying the protesters as the 'good guys' although it's still difficult getting away from the lifestyle focus.

The fence constructed around the camps before the eviction meant that once the undersheriff appeared on the scene security levels were not necessarily stepped up though the several complete deconstructions of the fence, with security collaboration, was probably about the same cost. This cooperation meant that protesters were still able to gain access to the site even when the fence was up; many of the security were quite blatant about their support and acknowledged that they were 'doing a job' but no more. If this meant turning a blind eye to avoid confrontation then they were often prepared to do so. When the undersheriff foolishly banned the delivery of food and water to camps still awaiting eviction (a decision reversed after three hours in the face of protester and media outcry) the bailiffs pooled their lunches and delivered the food to one camp declaring that they disagreed with the dictat.

The eviction is now in its fourth week - the undersheriff having taken on one camp at a time and the tunnellers doing an excellent job at restricting the use of cherry pickers on site and ensuring that the eviction process lasted a significant time. Manchester Airport saw not only a strategic and effective use of underground hurying but also a successful experiment with a 'scab-pod/platform' on a treeshouse. The four-storey construction, the Battlstar Galactica, managed to withstand four days of onslaught from the sheriff and his men and an increasingly infuriated Richard Turner and was eventually only defeated when a crane was brought on site.

What Newbury did for the south, Manchester Airport did for the north in terms of attracting thousands of new people and cementing the network for a sunny summer of actions. Aviation is firmly on the agenda and for more people than ever before it's clear that it ain't just about cars.

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EARTH FIRST! SUMMER GATHERING

As you should know the Earth First! Summer Gathering is from Wednesday 9th - Tuesday 15th July this year. It starts first thing on the Wednesday morning so make sure you arrive during the day on Tuesday 8th. There will be workshops on various subjects, both talks and physical skills training sessions. More importantly there will be large discussions that will hopefully address some of the issues that we as a movement need to deal with.

The Gathering is one of the few opportunities that we have to come together and talk about these things and it is chance that we must make the most of. To do this it would be useful if people could start thinking of some of the things that need to be discussed. These include what has happened over the last year, which parts of it have been good and bad, what we want and how then to go about getting it.

Organic vegan food will be available all week for roughly £2.50 per day. There is no space for live-in vehicles so please do not bring them. Remember - no dogs, press cameras or recording equipment and bring £10 to cover the costs of putting on the Gathering. The parking area is off site and once you leave your vehicle it will not be possible to move it until you leave, so make sure you bring everything you need for the whole week.

For details of where it is, and a map of how to get there, send an SAE to: Earth First! Summer Gathering, c/o 16 Sholebrook Avenue, Chapeltown, Leeds, LS7 3HB. Telephone 0113 262 9365. E-mail cornerstone@gn.apc.org Local transport contacts, as well as all Earth First! groups, will have details of the site and how to get there from 12 noon Friday 4th July.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

A new group, Arun Valley EF!, has started in Littlehampton, West Sussex. Their main concern is the proposed tourist developments in the Arun Valley above Arundel, one of the few remaining wildlife areas in the South East. AV EF! 01903 721615.

Campaigners in Beal Valley, Oldham, are stepping up action and need your help and support. The Valley is an important place for wildlife in the area yet is in danger of becoming a huge landfill site for construction waste, some of it from Runway 2 and the M66. Oldham EF! 01457 871609.

Europe Inc. is a new 72-page report on corporate lobbying in the EU. It gives a disturbing insight into the way in which multinationals, through bodies like the European Roundtable of Industrialists, work to shape EU policies. Copies for a fiver from A SEED Europe, PO Box 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

After 15 years of resistance Faslane is facing eviction from the 28th July. Input and energy are needed in this battle against the weapons of mass destruction. Faslane 01436 820901.

A Campaign Legal Group (CLG) has been set up to bring together all aspects of legal work involved in campaigns, to produce briefings, organise training sessions and put people in touch with good solicitors. It will also operate an auto file return service to enable any campaign group to obtain copies of court files and documents as quickly as possible. CLG 01942 513792.

Stay on your toes kids - the Judge's verdict in the McLibel Trial, the longest in English history, is expected this month, possibly Thursday 19th June. The McLibel Support Campaign has called an International Victory Day of Action on the Saturday after the verdict to celebrate. Leaflets, sample press releases, "adopt-a-store" info and other materials are available from the McLibel Support Campaign 0171 731269.

We've been assured that Sherwood Forest is safe from developers, who had plans to build a holiday village there. Although Centreparks deny any plans, people at the Thieves Wood occupation last year remember seeing plans for such a development. The Sherwood saga isn't over yet; although there doesn't seem to be any imminent plans, the forest may still be under the eye of developers.

The UN General Assembly will hold a Special Session in late June marking the fifth anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), better known as the Earth Summit. In honour of this, Corporate Watch has put together an 'Earth Summit Special' shining light on the role the world's largest corporations play in destroying the planet. Corporate Watch 01865 791391.

Super Heroes Against Genetix are announcing the launch of their own website. It gives details of the current debate, the players involved, accounts of previous actions and best of all, the X-Files. These are 'borrowed' details that have been published online due to their public importance.

<http://www.envirolink.org/orgs/shag/x-files.html>

AIRPORT SUPPORT

On the same morning that Undersherriff Randall Hibbert began an attempt to evict Flywood, the longest standing camp at the Manchester Airport protest site, his staff back in their elegant Chester offices must have thought they were far from the scene of the action.

Activists however didn't want them to miss out and took the protest straight back to Hibbert's offices. They managed to outwit two security guards, and gain entry to demand a meeting with the Undersherriff to discuss his refusal to allow independent legal observers access to the protest site. One activist locked onto a radiator, others inspected offices and made urgent phone calls and several more found their way onto the roof. Most of the staff seemed happy to have an early coffee break and a chat about the issues but two security guards (no doubt feeling a bit silly) kept wanting to try out armlocks on people and had to be scolded by police.

Eventually activists agreed to a chat by telephone instead of a meeting in person with Randy Hippy, as the Undersherriff has come to be known. He denied the need for legal observers, claiming that the eviction had been safe and gentle and refused to come to his office, claiming to be busy elsewhere.

Activists left after two hours, waving goodbye to the many police now occupying the garden. One person thinks she was arrested for breach of the peace - or maybe using the phone - but she's not sure...

RECLAIM YER STREETS

They're everywhere, practically every weekend, and sometimes you can go along and not even know anyone. Outrageous. Even in York, where there was no sound system and the city is almost entirely pedestrianised, several hundred people turned up and danced all day in glorious RTS sunshine. Meanwhile the police, in a remarkable policy switch, voluntarily stepped aside and waved the Greenpeace solar generator van through. A week earlier in Sheffield over 1000 people reclaimed a city centre dual carriageway as a simultaneous Critical Mass bike ride cruised around reclaiming other streets in the vicinity. Whilst madly dancing the reclaimers allowed a nervous policeman to escort out an even more nervous jag driver whose precious guzziar had sat five feet from the sound system for over an hour but was left completely untouched by the anarchist hoards. Struggling to reclaim the high ground the Sheffield local nonsense paper described the street party as "an aggressive hostile group allowed to hold people to ransom" and decided to focus on an old lady who couldn't catch her bus home. Similar anarchic scenes have taken place in Leicester and Finland and, when Tony Blair heads off to Amsterdam for a change of scenery next week, he'll find more of the same madness there too.

BAE ACTION

On June 2nd around 15 people occupied a British Aerospace office in Central London for four hours, "liberating" the company's closely guarded ethical policy from their Manual of Corporate Governance and closing the office all afternoon. Some of the 15 included activists restrained by High Court injunctions from trespassing on BAE property. Unfortunately for them they forgot to list this particular site in the schedule of places covered by the injunction thus enabling the protesters to carry on resisting! 13 people have been enjoined by the courts for protesting against the sale of Hawks to Indonesia.

where they've been used to suppress East Timorese resistance to the Indonesian occupation. Help and advice in fighting injunctions particularly welcome. Phone BAE Injunctees Campaign (BIG) on 0161 834 0295.

HOLTSFIELD II

The Holtsfield result in the House of Lords last month, in which some tenants won their case against eviction, was great as an initial victory but was limited as the developer, Ellitstone Ltd, has served notices to quit on further tenants. Tim Jones will have to pay 50,000 court costs before eviction proceedings can go ahead, but there are three chalets from the last round of attempted evictions which can be repossessed any time and heaves have been seen at Ellitstone looking at maps. A neighbour reports this saying "That lot won't know what's hit them this time!" Things might start happening soon so if you want to get on the phone tree call 01792 232643. The City and County of Swansea Council are seriously considering a Compulsory Purchase Order, but we can't pin our hopes on them - direct and urgent action is needed immediately.

OIL BE DAMNED

The Department of Trade and Industry received a visit recently from a group calling themselves BP (standing for either Blarney Pals, Broken Promises, Bloody Politics) armed with a wooden cutout of Sir David Simon and an oil drill. The group soon struck luck (or was it oil? or was it brewers yeast?) on the steps of the DTI which resulted in a trail of sticky black footprints all over Whitehall leading from the DTI.

A large banner was then unfurled bearing the words 'New Labour New Sleaze' recalling the fact that within a week of taking office the unelected former Chair of BP, David Simon, had been elected minister for competitiveness in Europe. BP in Columbia has admitted to paying the army and is accused of passing intelligence about protestors to paramilitary death squads. Hundreds of trade unionists and environmentalists have been killed.

Closer to our fairisle BP is facing criticism from Shetland fishermen who have been blockading Sullom Voe with around 15 boats. The terminal is run by BP on behalf of a consortium of oil companies and the fishermen are angry that they are not getting compensation claims for the Braer disaster.

AYE AYE CAPTAIN

At the end of May Paul Watson, the Sea Shepherd Captain jailed in Holland, won the first round in his battle against extradition to Norway when the presiding judge threw out two of the most serious charges. He will now spend two weeks considering the remaining arguments. Paul was detained in Holland in April following a Sea Shepherd action against illegal Norwegian whaling. The Norwegian state laid their charges and demanded extradition but with 'reckless navigating' and 'illegal entry into Norwegian Waters' out of the way the case has become a little flimsy leaving only the minor charge of sending a false distress signal. For this heinous crime Norwegian navy commandos dropped four depth charges on Sea Shepherd, fired on her with 50mm cannon and sheared off the bow in a ramming attack. The legal team relish the PR opportunity of this going to court and by the time of the ruling Paul will have been in jail for over 60 days even though sending a false distress signal normally carries just a small fine.

The initial verdict means that the Norwegian government has been rebuffed for sending an unjust extradition order and it is another Direct Action victory for everyone opposed to whale slaughter. But there's

How to Contact the Earth First! Action Update

Post: Earth First! Action Update, Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1 1HW. Telephone: 0161 224 4846. E-mail: actionupdate@gn.apc.org. Enclose a SAE for replies. Send us your details if you want to subscribe to the free e-mail server.

Earth First! Website address: <http://www.hrc.wmln.ac.uk/campaigns/EF/earthfirst.html>

PRESSMENNAN EIGHT

Eight people have been arrested near Pressmennan Wood in East Lothian and charged under an 1865 Act which was passed to stop dispossessed crofters occupying their crofts during the Highland clearances. These arrests took place at the camp set up in protest at plans to fell ancient oak trees at Pressmennan.

Pressmennan Wood north contains over 1000 mature oak trees which are at least 200 years old. Plans are afoot however to fell 360 trees for sale to a timber company.

Since the original camp was evicted in mid April another camp has been set up in the adjacent Meiklerg woodland. As well as the oak trees the area targeted for felling also includes majestic heeches and ancient Caledonian pine. Contact 0131 657 4392 for info and answers to questions such as: Should landowners be able to exploit nature for profit? Do landowners have any less power than in 1865? How could initial hail conditions banning the arrestees from the whole county of East Lothian be justified?

SHOREHAM

On 16th May this year we attempted to 'combine the issues, confront industry'. By inviting the relevant malcontented single issue groups like anti-timber and animal rights to stand together and "shut down the port". Come the morning there were 60 of us and 800 of them. The police were anticipating an animal rights demo, and it was reported that 9 AR houses were raided over Shoreham, spreading hopeless paranoia. Realising we were not quite ready to take on modern civilisation in its entirety that day, we considered our options then sat in the sunshine with ice-cream and coffees. What followed was 25 people split into groups of 5 entering Marks & Spencers at 3 minute intervals. A trolley run of all soya foods held up every till while a "you are all in danger" rant serenaded the shoppers. The unimpressed managers called for back-up which came in the shape of 6 cop vans from Shoreham. We even had the very first arrest for a genetics action, for criminal damage to a shirt!

YOU'LL NEVER STOP IT YOU KNOW

You won't need much analytical skill to work out the victory at Stringers Common where Surrey County Council have completely backed down and abandoned their plans to widen the A320. They faced a protracted battle in the trees and tunnels of five camps on the site and decided that it just wasn't worth it. This saves them quite a bit of cash but more importantly the determination and commitment of the Direct Action movement in this case has saved an SSSI, a pond and 221 mature trees all held together in an established eco-system. Part of the success has to go to the growing acceptance that people are right to fight for real progress and that it's not something which is going to go away. One of the campaigners at Stringers Common said, "The public are waking up to the realisation that more roads can only be bad news for the environment and our health. This is a victory not only for the local people around Stringer's Common but for everyone that has dared to stand up to car culture, from Twyford Down, to the M11 through to Newbury and the proposed Bingley Bypass. If the camps had not been here this road would have gone ahead. The cost of evictions has made it impossible and direct action has again proved to be a successful tactic in defending our environment." As soon as the Compulsory Purchase Orders have been cancelled the camps will be dismantled and the land restored to how it was before the activists arrived leaving the common safe for future generations of people and wildlife.

GET DOWN TO LYMINGE

The Stringers Common spirit should be attracting hordes of pixies to Lyminge Forest where another ridiculously possible victory is waiting to be won. The Forestry Commission have been 'obliged' to sell 440 acres of forest to Rank Organisation for their planned holiday village but the planning permission states that the land must be vacant before the sale can even go ahead. Although possession orders have been granted, like at Guilford, the more difficult and expensive evictions look then the more likely it'll be that they just won't happen. There's lots of speculation about when so the call is out now for people who want to work. Other attractions are the site's proximity to the coast, the upcoming fruit picking season in the 'Garden of England and the totally tatted Forestry Commission's log cabin toilets.

PROTEST CAMP AT WYNDHAM HILL

Wyndham Hill, in Yeovil, is bordered on three out of four sides by concrete, development and car parks. It is a precious fragment of natural habitat, topped by 4 old lime trees. On the open part of the hill is an unbroken view of the Dorset border, marked by the river Ye. Nestling into the hill is a popular river walk used by thousands. Now all of this is threatened by 'development'.

There have been plans to develop the hill in the past. In 1994 Sainsbury's plans to build a store on the site were scuppered. They also intended to find a 'bypass' that would have destroyed the riverside walk and conveniently acted as an access road for them. Using a combination of lobbying and direct action Sainsbury's were well and truly persuaded to give up!

This year South Somerset District Council produced a draft plan, which they intended to trash the hill by building a carpark and link road on it. Now they have seven tree houses with more on the way and underground tunnels to contend with. The tunnels go under an existing car park which the council has had to close through fear of subsidence - it will soon be used for more useful things, like growing cabbages and beans!

The main camp has been in place for over two months. It's on the edge of a 16th century country estate which will also be trashed if the "Evil Lords of Tarmac" get their way. There are about thirty residents at present and they've had massive local support (a "Beep for Wyndham" sign has had to be taken down because the beeping was continuous!). Eviction orders have been given, a court case held and they've been ordered to leave forthwith. Activists believe that this is a winnable campaign so are encouraging people to join them as soon as possible. Contact 01935 863349 for info.

TROLLERCOMBE MILE

A collective of A30 campaigners tested the 'Vote Labour for more of the same bollocks' idea by setting up a new camp on the lunar landscape which was Fairmile. As site security dreamed of winning the lottery, locals and activists dug through the night and by morning had a secure section of tunnel, erected a tripod and recycled lock-ons which had been left on site since the eviction in January. Finally security got on to it and while place was soon swarming with police and media, all suitably stunned by the crafty ingenuity. A30 Action challenged New Labour to halt all DFBO schemes and demanded a public enquiry into the A30 works (there's never been one). It took most of the day for police and security to clear the site and by the evening New Britain was much the same as Old Britain (except for a bigger and more expensive security presence).

EVENTS

JUNE

The Saturday after the McLibel verdict International Victory Day of Action on McDonald's 0171 713 1269

Temeln

People needed from mid June to help prepare, plan for actions and share travelling and other experience Help with travel/accommodation available Contact Ben on +420-5-4221-0438 or via Thrush DJUNA, Jakubski nam 7, 602 00 Brno Czech Republic

14 -15 Faslane Peace Camp Birthday Party Celebrating 15 years of resistance with music, dancing, juggling and activities for kids big and small Also be at Peace Camp on Sunday afternoon for an action on Sunday night or Monday morning. 01436 820001

15 Faslane action (see above)

21 Bristol Reclaim the Streets Castle Park at 12 30pm 0117 939 3093

21 Landmine Action Day For info contact UK Working Group on Landmines on 0171 281 6073

JULY

4 Mass Trespass at Merveth Hill, "Independence from America" day 01403 486593

5-6 Ploghsharsheer action north summer camp Tel 01865 714036

6 Concorde Beagle action, Herefordshire Contact 0171 278 3066

8 Liner Reclaim the Streets Meet Victoria Park WA Memorial Jm

6-14 Temeln Nuclear Powerplant direct action camp Call 01524 849313 for info

9-15 Earth First! Summer Gathering, Scotland Workshops, training, discussions, entertainment Starts first thing Wednesday 9th so arrive during the day on the Tuesday For more details send an SAE marked "map" to Earth First! Gathering, c/o 16 Sholebrook Avenue, Chapelton, Leeds, LS7 3JTB Telephone 0113 262 9365 E-mail comenstone@gn.apc.org

13 Walk for the Indians of Peru Pressure Mobil to stop oil exploration in the Peruvian Amazon 0171 242 1441

19 Reclaim urban space, Portsmouth Tinson Centre Music, circus, workshops Info 01705 826672

23-27 Big Green Gathering - workshops, music, etc 01747 874667

26 Urban Fest Festival, Peckham, London

26-2 August Second International Meeting for Humanity & Against Neo-Berlinism, Barcelona, Spain Following an initiative taken by the Chupas, this Encuentro aims to form "an international network...comprising all those who resist" Contact London Committee c/o BM-CRL, London WC1N 3XX

AUGUST

1-14 Ecotopia Gathering, nr Edinburgh, Scotland Contact EYFA, PO Box 94115, 1090 GC Amsterdam, Netherlands +31 20 665 7743 eyfa@intern.nl

7-10 Youth & Student CND Peace Camp, outside Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment, near Reading 0171 607 3616

9 Nagasaki Day actions at Faslane and other nuclear sites 01436 820001

16 National demo against Unilever (bbc) Info Arxnews 01862 711835

30-2 Alternative Arms Fair and peace demo nr Farnborough Ashdownwatts exhibition Info 0171 281 0297 30-2

SEPTEMBER

1 Mass blockade of Farnborough Airfield Shut down the Royal Navy and British Army Equipment Exhibition (Remotely Resisted for short) on the first trade day of the arms fair Assemble at end of Reading Road where it joins main A25 For accommodation and further details contact Campaign Against the Arms Trade on 0171 281 0297

OCTOBER

1 Mass non-violent act down and blockade of the Copex Arms Fair Contact Campaign Against the Arms Trade for further details on 0171 281 0297

11-18 Week of Global Action Against McDonald's (incorporating 12th - Solidarity With McDonald's Workers, and 16th - World Anti-McDonald's Day) For info contact 0171 713 1269

12 Day of solidarity with McDonald workers Contact McLibel Support on 0171 7131269

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Regular Sunday Fundays in the lead up to the evictions brought hundreds of locals on site and their support was phenomenal. These so called green wellied 'nimbies' and the equally mythical 'ecowarriors' ignored the marginalising definitions and worked together on the vision of real progress.

On going to press there's still one person down the Cakehole tunnel and there is still potential for visits to AMEC, TARMAC, Randell the Vandal and other greasy palms. The latest media guestimate has the costometer flashing like mad at Six Million Pounds and rising. Well done to everyone who came to cost, a bigger chunk of the population is thinking about sustainability with a whole hunch of them now prepared to fight for it.

GM FREE PRISONERS

UK prisoners may have the safest diet in the country after a jailed airport campaigner went on hunger strike to fight for a GM-free diet at HMP Risley.

After 5 days the governor gave in to her demands and toured around the kitchens to find out what is safe. This precedent paves the way for GM-free food diets at all prisons, institutions and schools if people demand them.

Help and guidance available from GM Free Prisoner Support on 0161 224 4846.

GRIMSBY A16

The Peaks Parkway project is a planned 5km diversion of the A16 through Grimsby. For much of its course the road will follow the line of the old Grimsby-Louth railway. Several groups have formed to oppose the building of this road on various grounds: the road is routed along an important section of green belt and recreational space, it will take in part of the site of an Iron Age village, it will divide two schools from their catchment areas and it will run through a densely populated residential area causing the compulsory purchase of homes and gardens. Traffic patterns around Grimsby have changed dramatically since the road was first proposed over 20 years ago and the planned development is now being described as obsolete, before it is even built.

Over the last few weeks local residents have initiated peaceful protests on the site, including holding parties and jumping in and out of the contractor, Birse's compound. Protesters have also marched through the city centre bearing a coffin containing a tree. To date campaigners have had 9 arrests for obstruction and aggravated trespass and 3 school children have been charged with a criminal offence for trying to stop the destruction of trees, hedgerows and wildlife. Help is needed - camping space is available and about 20 of the houseuses on route are living empty. All are welcome to the campaigners' Solstice Party. For further info contact STROPP (80p the Road on Peaks Parnham) 01472 278845.

BEAGLES IN CONSORT

Beagle breeders in Consort. Hereford have watched monthly actions on their kennels grow to national closedown proportions. The latest in May saw the police lines overrun and a couple of hundred liberators pouring into kennels. Surprised cops resorted to CS gas but were still powerless in the face of mass action which so far has used up half of their budget.

There's up to 800 beagles at any time in Consort where thousands are bred and sold to vivisection labs every year. Channel Four's "Counterside Watch" has shown the puppies being punched, injected, thrown around and then killed and gutted at just six months old, and all this for profit. Outrage at these scenes have brought thousands to Consort over the past few months with the next action on 6th July promising to be the biggest ever.

Consort is just 5 miles up the A49 from Ross-on-Wye. Meet at 12.00 noon at the main gate. Info call 0171 278 3068

Find the links and understand them



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CS GAS

ITS EFFECTS AND HOW TO COMBAT THEM.

In the last few months the police have used CS gas on activists and demonstrators several times; twice at Consort, the vivisection beagle breeders in Herefordshire, and more recently at a post-action party in Kent. There's even unconfirmed rumours that it was used by eviction teams at Manchester airport.

There's already been a couple of police custody CS related deaths so these examples of its use at actions should be taken seriously. CS is an accepted part of the police arsenal and we are likely to see an increase of its use at demonstrations. Everyone should be aware of this worrying trend and be prepared to deal with it.

BRIEF HISTORY

CS is short for O-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile. The properties of this compound were first discovered by American chemists in 1928, and the potential chemical warfare uses suggested by a Dutch writer a little later in 1934. During World War Two scientists in various countries studied the compound but it wasn't seriously developed as a weapon until the mid 50's. The first widespread use was during the Vietnam War, both in America and Vietnam, and it has remained a favourite of police forces and armies ever since.

Police in the UK have had access to CS for years and have used it often in Ireland. But now it has passed from specialist riot control units and is on general issue to forces throughout the mainland. It's carried in small cans the size of roll-on deodorants and attached to the standard copper's belt. (The large green canisters you can see on belts of riot police are not CS but fire extinguishers).

THE EFFECTS

The canisters currently carried by the police contain three ingredients; the active chemical (CS), a liquid solvent to dissolve and carry it and an inert gas to act as a propellant for the spray. The active ingredient CS is one of a group of chemical compounds called lachrymators. These chemicals are tear producing agents, hence the euphemism 'tear gas'. Exposure causes severe eye irritation, a profuse flow of tears, skin irritation (especially on moist areas of the body) and irritation of the upper respiratory tract, causing sneezing, coughing and difficulty in breathing.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SPRAYED

(1) If you are in the line of spray move away or if in a building move outside. Your eyesight will become very blurred and you may lose awareness of what is going on around you. Do not run blindly away as there is a real danger of running into the arms of the police or traffic. Try to act calmly and stay aware of your surroundings while moving to a safe area.

(2) Stand upwind of where the spraying took place and expose the affected part of your body to the wind. This will help disperse the gas.

(3) Flush the affected area with cold water. Do not rub or itch as you will spread the chemical and rub it into your pores. Depending on how much gas you were sprayed with it may be possible to return to the action as small amounts should only effect you for a few minutes.

(4) When possible have a cold/lukewarm shower (hot water opens the pores letting in gas particles). Showers flush particles away while baths may spread them around.

(5) Later you should hang your clothes in a well ventilated area to disperse the last particles. When they've hung for a day or so wash them twice, once in cold water, then again in hot and they'll be okay to wear again.

CS Gas is fat and oil soluble, so never coat your face in petroleum jelly or similar substances for protection, as some people tried in the Anti-Vietnam War protests of the 60's. Don't treat the affected area with any cream, jelly or ointment unless advised by a doctor; this will spread the chemical and aggravate the symptoms. The best treatments are air, cold water and time.

PROTECTION

(1) The obvious one is a gas mask. They're available but expensive (the only ones worth using are current ex-military designs). They tend to be bulky and make you conspicuous in a crowd although in the future they may become standard wear for everyone.

(2) A mask and hood will offer some limited protection and they are well worth wearing anyway for disguise. An improvement on the normal bandanna is a special cycle mask (the Respro Urban Bandit is particularly good - about £10 from your local bike shop) as they contain activated charcoal which filters out CS.

(3) Goggles can be useful for eye protection and are easy to get hold of and carry.

(4) Carry a bottle of clean water to rinse the skin and eyes of anyone sprayed.

(5) If you're asthmatic tell the people around you before the action or demonstration starts so that if you have a bad reaction they'll know why and be able to react appropriately.

This may seem over cautious but to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Here's hoping you never need it.

The Molly Maguire Fan Club.

EE! CONTACTS JUNE '97

Arva Valley Ef!
o/e 1 York Rd
Littlehampton
W Sussex BN15 3AA
01903 721615
aaronvalley@bt.com

Avon Gorge Ef!
Box 51
Greenleaf Bookshop
82 Colston Street
Bristol BS1 5BP
Bath Ef!
PO Box 426
Bath BA1 2ZD
Tel: 01249 713742
01249 650078

Beal Valley Rescue
33 Valley Rise
Rushmore, Oldham,
Lancashire OL2 7QF

Blackburn Ef!
12 Balmoral Road
Darwen
Lancs, BB3 2EW
Tel: 01254 777079

Cambourne Ef!
o/e Harlin Farm
Copper Hill
Troon, Cambridgeshire
Cambridgeshire
Cambridge Ef!
Box E
12 Mill Road,
Cambridge

Cardiff Ef!
o/e Green Group
Clamorgan Unit SU
Pontypridd
Mid-Glamorgan
CF37 1DL
01222 706236

Cardigan Bay Ef!
Temperance House Taliesin
Powers, Mid Wales

Chichester Ef!
o/e West Sussex Wildlife
Protection
o/e P.O. Box 3058
Littlehampton
W. Sussex BN16 3LG

East Devon Ef!
PO Box 6
Ottery St Mary
Devon EX11 1YL
01404 815729
http://www.tury361.
demon.co.uk/a3/index.htm

East Devon Ef!
PO Box 6
Ottery St Mary
Devon EX11 1YL
01404 815729
http://www.tury361.
demon.co.uk/a3/index.htm

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http://www.tury361.
demon.co.uk/a3/index.htm

East Devon Ef!
PO Box 6
Ottery St Mary
Devon EX11 1YL
01404 815729
http://www.tury361.
demon.co.uk/a3/index.htm

Hillfort Ef!
9 Hordens Close
Chippenhams
W. Sussex BN15 3AA
01249 650078

Hull On Earth
o/e PO Box 33
Hull HU1 1AA
01482 218377
01482 441950

LEAF
Box Z
13, Biddulph St
Leicester LE2 1BH
Tel/Fax: 0116 255 3223

Leeds Ef!
16 Sholebrook Ave
Chapelworth
Leeds LS7 3HB
0113 262 9365
cornerstone@gn.apc.org

Lune Ef!
24 Penny Street
Lancaster
01524 849313

Manchester Ef!
Dept 29,
1 Newton St
Manchester M1 1HW
Tel/Fax 0161 224 4846
mbx6@stud.man.ac.uk

Mid-Somerset Ef!
PO Box 23
5 High St
Olastonbury
Somerset BA6 9PU

Newcastle Ef!
4, The Cloth Market
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
NE1 1EA
No M66
14 Eaton Rd
Oldham OL8 4HR
0161 368 3810

Norfolk Ef!
o/e U.E.A. Union of
Students
Norwich
Norfolk NR4 7TJ
01508 531635

Oldham Ef!
Dept 110
1 Newton Street
Manchester M1 1HW
01457 871609

Oldham Ef!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

Oldham Ef!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

Oldham Ef!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

Oldham Ef!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

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Oxford, OX4 1RQ

Oldham Ef!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

Oldham Ef!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ

South Somerset Ef!
31 Hamdon Close
Stokton Sub-Hamdon
Somerset TA14 6QN
01935 824074

Stringers Common
2 Oak Cottages
Stringers Common
Guildford
Surrey GU4 7PS
04183 532167
rainforest/4452/
hairyimg.html
germa@quarkless.quarkx.co.uk

The Flat Oak Society
o/e St Albans Lane
Canterbury
Kent CT1 2EB
01227 463368

Upper Nene Ef!
Box E,
24 St. Michaels Avenue,
Northampton NN1

Warwick Ef!
o/e Green Society
Students Union
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL
01926 435377
susa@cs.warwick.ac.uk

Wolves Ef!
o/e Wolves Hunt Sabs
Box H Wolverhampton
University Student Union
Wulfruna Street
Wolverhampton

York Ef!
o/e York LEAF
Peace Centre
Clifford Street
York
01904 410185

York Ef!
o/e York LEAF
Peace Centre
Clifford Street
York
01904 410185

York Ef!
o/e York LEAF
Peace Centre
Clifford Street
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Peace Centre
Clifford Street
York
01904 410185

York Ef!
o/e York LEAF
Peace Centre
Clifford Street
York
01904 410185

Mendip Hills Not Holes
PO Box 2113
Shepton Mallet, BA4
Road Alert!
PO Box 5544 Newbury
Berkshire RG14 5FB
roadalert@gn.apc.org

Toxic Alert Ef!
PO Box 2600
Brighton BN2 2DY

Autonomous Green Action
POB 4721
Station E
Ottawa
Ontario
Canada K1S 5H9

Ballyhoora Talamh Glas
(Green Earth)
Co. Antrim
Killean
Garrypallane
Co. Limerick
00 353 62 46688

Coast Mountains Ef!
1472 Commercial Drive
Box 128
Vancouver BC V5L 3X9
Canada
604 708 9660

Earth First! Journal
POB 1415
Eugene
OR 97440
USA
541 741 9191
earthfirst@qpc.apc.org

EcoDefence
Moskova prospekt
120-3423606
Kalliningrad/Koenigsberg
Russia
ecodefence@glas.apc.org

Finland Ef!
Vinkuvuori 17 A 17
33610 Tampere FI
Finland
ransu@sci.fi
http://www.sci.fi/~ransu

Germany Ef!
o/e Avalon
Friedrich-Ebert Str.
24 45127 Essen
Germany
Greene Front 1
Postbus 85069
3508 AB
Utrecht
The Netherlands

Rainbow Keepers
(Ukraine)
o/e Naida Shevchenko
Glushkova 17-22
Kyiv 252187
nada@ukr.apc.org

Rainforest Information
Center POB 368
Lismore
NSW 2480
Australia
066 21 85 05

Slovakia Ef!
A. Hlinku 11
96001 Zvolen
Slovakia
kolenska@vut.tuzvo.sk

Volenka for Earth
Defence
189 San Antonio Ext
SFDM
1105 Quezon City
Philippines

Young Lions Ef! South Africa
101356 2333@compuserve.com
Gronse Front (Dutch Ef!)
o/e South Downs Ef!

Advisory Service for
Squatters 2, St Pauls Road
London N1 2QN
0171 359 8814

ALP Supporters Group
BCM Box 1160
London WC1N 3XX

Anarchist Black Cross
o/e 121 Raiton Rd
London, SE24 0LR

Anarchist-Primitivist
Network PO Box 252
Rickmansworth, Herts
WD3 3AY

Anti-Fascist Action
BM Box 1734
London WC1N 3XX
0161 232 0813

Campaign Against
Runway2
6 Mount St
Manchester M2 5NS
0161 834 8221
campaign@mfoc.u-net.com
http://www.gn.apc.org/
resurgence/cas2.html

Campaign Legal Group
43 Swan Meadow Rd
Poulstock
Wigan WN3 8BJ
Tel: 01942 513792
Fax: 01942 510156
clg@nolaninc.win-
uk.net

Conscious Cinema
PO Box 2679
Brighton
BN2 2EF
01273 278018

Contraflow
56A Info Shop
56 Cranston St
London, SE17
0171 326 0353

Counter Information
o/e Transmission
28 King St
Glasgow, G1 5QP

GuilFIN
PO Box 217
London, SE17
0171 326 0353

GuilFIN
PO Box 217
London, SE17
0171 326 0353

The Ecologist Agriculture
House 188 Road
Shurminster Newton
Dorset, DT10 1DU
01258 73476
ecologist@gn.apc.org

EarthRights
Lentbridge Centre
Bartlefield Rd
London NW1 2TL
0171 2781005
earthrights@gn.apc.org

Freedom Network
PO Box 9384
London, SW9 7ZB
0171 978 8294
Africa: 0171 793 7343

Green Anarchist Network
BCM 1715
London, WC1N 3XX

Hunt Saboteurs Assoc.
PO BOX 2786
Brighton BN2 2AX
01273 622827
has@gn.apc.org
http://www.link.org.uk/has/has.html

Friends of MOVE
P.O. Box 14129
London W12 8GR
Industrial Workers of the
World
BM Box 4529
London WC1N 3XX
Justice?/Coforum
o/e Larkfield Centre
39, Ingfield Street
Glasgow G42
0141 226 5066/ 424 1797
Justice?/Schnepps
PO Box 2600
Brighton
BN2 2DX
01273 685913
http://www.chuzz.co.uk/
SchNEWS/index.html

Justice?/Coforum
o/e Larkfield Centre
39, Ingfield Street
Glasgow G42
0141 226 5066/ 424 1797

Justice?/Schnepps
PO Box 2600
Brighton
BN2 2DX
01273 685913
http://www.chuzz.co.uk/
SchNEWS/index.html

LAMB
Dept 29,
1 Newton St
Manchester M1 1HW
0161 274 4663
mfex1@stud.man.ac.uk

Legal Defence & Monitoring
Group
BM Haven
London WC1N 3XX
0181 5337116

McLibel Support Campaign
5 Caledonian Rd
Kings Cross
London N1 9DX
0171 713 1269

McSpotlight
PO Box 10792
London N10 3PQ
0171 6810377
http://www.mcspotlight.org/
info@mcspotlight.org

Menwith Womens Peace
Camp A59 Lay-by
Nr. Menwith Hill Bysbaze
Nr. Harrogate
N Yorks
01943 468593

Menwith Womens Peace
Camp A59 Lay-by
Nr. Menwith Hill Bysbaze
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WHAT IS EARTH FIRST!?

Earth First! is not a cohesive group or a campaign but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop, and eventually reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and its inhabitants. The above contacts are autonomous groups that consider themselves to share these principles. International contacts are entry points into that country's own network of groups. Other contacts are ones whose aims and principles are ones that we agree with fully or in part, or groups that we think may be of use or interest to people.

New additions or alterations are shown in bold.